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*SACERDOTALISM*¹

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NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION

The provisions for the fourth of the series of Dupleian Lectures are as follows:

"The fourth and last lecture I would have for the maintaining, explaining, and proving the validity of the ordination of ministers or pastors of the churches, and so their administration of the sacraments or ordinances of religion as the same hath been practiced in New England, from the first beginning of it, and so continued at this day. Not that I would in any wise invalidate Episcopal Ordination, as it is commonly called and practiced in the Church of England; but I do esteem the method of ordination as practiced in Scotland, at Geneva, and among the dissenters in England, and in the churches in this country, to be very safe, Scriptural and valid; and that the great Head of the church, by his blessed spirit, hath owned, sanctified, and blessed them accordingly, and will continue to do so to the end of the World. Amen."

The topic of Sacerdotalism is naturally involved in the terms of this Foundation.

The term "Sacerdotalism" has been defined as "the doctrine that the man who ministers in sacred things, the institution through which and the office or order in which he ministers, the acts he performs, the sacraments and rites he celebrates, are so ordained and constituted of God as to be the peculiar channels of His grace, essential to true worship, necessary to the being of religion, and the full realization of the religious life."²

The sacerdotal system is not necessarily connected with an episcopal system, though as an historical fact it has usually been identified with some theory of the rights and powers of bishops. In its widest significance Sacerdotalism is not necessarily con-

¹ Dupleian Lecture, delivered at Harvard University, May 4, 1910.

² A. M. Fairbairn, *Studies in Religion and Theology*, p. 19.

nected, as the etymology of the term indicates, with the priesthood, for the distinctive note of Sacerdotalism is exclusiveness. It signifies that a given order of men, or a given institution, is a peculiar channel of divine grace, in such a sense that true worship and the full significance of the religious life is only possible through it. Any denomination of Christians which holds that its church order, its officials, or its rites are essential to the bestowment of the grace of God, identifies itself with a phase of Sacramentalism. Presbyterianism, Independency, or Quakerism, by a note of exclusiveness, may easily become, in a legitimate, if not in the etymological sense, sacerdotal.

But historically Sacerdotalism, for the most part, has been true to the derivation of the word. It connects itself with a polity and a priesthood, an order of men, who stand in such a relation to Deity that they and they alone become the media of his grace. In Judaism this order was hereditary. In the Roman communion this order reaches back by tactual succession and consecration to the apostles. Grace flows downward from Christ himself and his apostles through a line of bishops every one of whom has received consecration from a predecessor until there is an unbroken line back to Christ himself.

The sharp antithesis to this position is taken by those communions which hold to the true priesthood of all believers. According to their view no intermediary between the soul and Christ is necessary. Any human soul may come directly to him in repentance and faith and receive the full measure of his grace.

The leading distinction between the two systems lies in answer to the question, What must one do to share the grace of God? The sacerdotalist says, "Go to the priest and receive the sacraments, which can only be administered by one who has been prelatically ordained." The evangelical says, "Go directly to Christ in repentance and faith and receive eternal life at his hands."

The Church of England, during the half-century following the reforming parliament of 1529, did not hold strenuously to the sacerdotal system of Rome. The prayer books of Edward and Elizabeth and the Thirty-nine Articles may be interpreted in a sense which favors the Roman theory of the priesthood, but

that interpretation is nullified by various facts. It is difficult for any one who is familiar with the mental attitude and temper of the reforming divines to believe that Hooker and Cranmer and Latimer did not reach a point which was very nearly the modern evangelical position. But we are not left to conjecture; all these men certainly recognized the theologians and pastors of the continent as the possessors of a ministry as valid as their own.³

The view, too, of Hooker in his *Ecclesiastical Polity* left the door open for the recognition of the Presbyterians of Geneva, the Lutherans of Saxony, and the Independents of Frankfort. He said:

I see that certain reformed churches, the Scottish especially and the French, have not that which best agreeth with the Holy Scripture—I mean the government that is by bishops—inasmuch as both those churches are fallen under a different kind of regimen, which to remedy it is for the one altogether too late, and too soon for the other during this present affliction and trouble; this their defect and imperfection I had rather lament in such a case than exagitate.⁴

And Bishop Lancelot Andrews (1555–1625) could write: “He is blind who doth not see churches existing without it [episcopacy]. He is hard-hearted who denieth them salvation. We are not so hard-hearted.”⁵ As late as the reign of James I, Lord Bacon, in his Advertisement, characterized the denial that the Protestant pastors of the continent were “lawful ministers” as the crude and impertinent opinion of “some indiscreet persons.”⁶

Macaulay’s well-known summary of the position of the Church of England as to sacerdotalism during the Reformation and the generations immediately following it can hardly be gainsaid:

The Church of Rome held that Episcopacy was of divine institution and certain supernatural graces of a high order had been transmitted by

³ William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, vol. i, p. 32.

⁴ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book iii, chap. 4.

⁵ “Nec tamen si nostra divini juris sit, inde sequitur, vel quod sine ea salus non sit, vel quod stare non possit Ecclesia. Caecus sit, qui non videat stauetes sine ea Ecclesias. Ferreus sit, qui salutem eis neget. Nos non sumus illi ferrei.” *Opuscula: Responsio ad epist. II Petri Molinaei*, edition of 1629, p. 176.

⁶ Bacon’s *Works*, Montagu ed., vol. ii, p. 417.

the imposition of hands through fifty generations from the Eleven who received their commission on the Galilean Mount to the Bishops who met at Trent. A large body of Protestants, on the other hand, regarded prelacy as positively unlawful, and persuaded themselves that they found a very different form of ecclesiastical government prescribed in Scripture. The founders of the Anglican Church took a middle course. They retained episcopacy, but they did not declare it to be an institution essential to the welfare of a Christian society, or to the efficacy of the sacraments. Cranmer, indeed, on one occasion plainly avowed his conviction that, in the primitive times, there was no distinction between bishops and priests, and that the laying on of hands was altogether superfluous.⁷

The *jure divino* theory of Church polity was made a leading issue in England through the Presbyterian Cartwright. Calvin would have agreed with Hooker as to church government. Both would have said that the controlling factors in determining what polity was most advisable in given circumstances were reasonable deductions from Scripture and the experience of the ages, tempered by considerations of expediency. Cartwright, however, became so enamoured of Presbyterianism that he taught that the Presbyterian polity existed by divine right. Archbishop Bancroft took the same ground for episcopacy.⁸ Bancroft himself was not consistent with this view in his own practice, but he sowed the seed. It did not immediately come to harvest, however. So late as 1518 James I recognized the standing of the non-episcopal churches by sending commissioners to the Synod of Dort. But the fruitage was not long delayed. Archbishop Laud (1573-1645) did for the Church of England what Strafford did for the monarchy. The churchmanship of Laud was not the churchmanship of Newman or R. H. Froude, but it was as exclusive in its claims of the necessity of episcopal ordination to constitute a true church or a valid celebration of the eucharist.

The extent to which the sacerdotal theory came to dominate the Church of England is shown by a comparison of the Act of Uniformity of 1662 (14 Charles II, cap. 4) with that of 1559 (1 Elizabeth, cap. 2). In these acts the Prayer Book is enforced with almost equal stringency. But the act of Elizabeth laid no such

⁷ Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i, pp. 58-59.

⁸ A Sermon preached at Paules Crosse the 9 of Februarie, 1588.

stress upon episcopal ordination as the act of the Restoration parliament. The sacerdotal claim expressed in this Act was one of its principal grounds of offence to the deprived ministers. Howe, for example, made his objection to reordination a principal reason for his refusal to conform. He stated this to the Bishop of Exeter, and when the Bishop inquired how reordination could hurt him, Howe replied: "It hurts my *understanding*. . . . Nothing can have two beginnings. I am sure I am a minister of Christ. I cannot begin again to be a minister."

The New England churches only gradually reached their independent position, though it was logically involved in their general attitude. The Plymouth Colony regarded John Robinson as pastor. There appears to be no evidence that the sacraments were observed before the coming of Lyford, and his disreputable career must have given a shock to any remaining sentiment that the impartation of grace could be in any way dependent on ordination. In the Massachusetts Bay Colony the first ministers had received episcopal ordination in the Church of England, but the events that had been taking place in England, the triumphs of the Presbyterians and Independents, the restoration of Charles II, and his Act of Uniformity, had dispelled the last fleecy cloud of sanctity from episcopal ordination. It is not wonderful that Judge Dudley, trained under the New England system, perfectly familiar with the course of events thus hastily surveyed, should have prescribed that the topic of one of the lecture courses he founded at Harvard College should be the defence of non-episcopal ordination.

It is unnecessary to follow the modern development of Sacerdotalism in the Church of England in the Tractarian and Ritualistic movements. It is sufficient to point out that the Gorham case (1849) settled the right of the Evangelicals within the Established Church, and the *Essays and Reviews* case did the same for the men of the Broad Church. A recent historian states the exact fact when he says: "The position taken by the highest courts is to this effect, that a clergyman may say and write what he pleases on theological matters, so long as he does not distinctly contradict the exact words of the Articles or the Prayer Book. The utmost freedom is now accorded the English clergy, all shades

of opinion abounding.”⁹ It is probably just to say that while the Church of England is largely sacerdotal in practice, it is not necessarily so in doctrine.

In view of this survey we see exactly what the protest of this lectureship is. It is not against the episcopal ordination practiced by the Church of England any more than it is against a theory of Presbyterianism or Independency that would make such organizations the sole channel of divine grace. The protest is against any theory of the ministry or of the church which makes a given order of men or a given institution the necessary intermediary between the soul and Christ. The terms of Judge Dudley’s Foundation make this clear beyond question.

This protest may be vindicated on several distinct grounds.

I. The ground which Judge Dudley specifically mentioned deserves our attention. “The great Head of the Church, by his blessed Spirit, hath owned, sanctified, and blessed them [non-episcopal ordinations] accordingly, and will continue to do so to the end of the world.” Those who are outside the sacerdotal circle actually share the divine grace.

Purcell’s *Life of Cardinal Manning* is one of those biographies which, following the example of Froude’s *Carlyle*, discloses the reverse side of the tapestry quite as much as the pictured. Frequently, towards the close of his life, the Cardinal writes in a tone of disillusionment as to the practical working of the Roman system. I cite Manning’s confession because it so admirably vindicates in our modern world the contention of our founder that the administration of the sacraments or ordinances of religion at the hands of those episcopally ordained is not in the least necessary for the possession of divine grace. Manning wrote August 5, 1890:

My experience among those who are out of the Church confirms all that I have written of the doctrines of grace. I have intimately known souls living by faith, hope, and charity, and the sanctifying Grace with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, in humility, absolute purity of heart and life, in constant meditation on Holy Scripture, unceasing prayer, complete self-denial, personal work among the poor; in a word, living lives of visible sanctification, as undoubtedly the work of the Holy Ghost

⁹ Newman, *Church History*, vol. ii, p. 658.

as I have ever seen. I have seen this in whole families, rich and poor, and in all conditions of life. . . .

And further, all the great works of charity in England have had their beginning out of the Church, for instance, the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery; and the persevering protest of the Anti-Slavery Society. Not a Catholic name so far as I know shared in this. France, Portugal, and Brazil have been secretly or openly slave trading or, till now even, slave holding. The whole Temperance movement. It was a Quaker that made F. Mathew a total abstainer. Catholic Ireland and the Catholics of England, until now, have done little for temperance. The Anglican and Dissenting ministers are far more numerously total abstainers than our priests. The Act of Parliament to protect animals from cruelty was carried by a non-Catholic Irishman. The Anti-Vivisection Act also. Both are derided to my knowledge among Catholics. The Acts to protect children from cruelty were the work of Dissenters. On these three Societies there is hardly a Catholic name. On the last, mine was for long the only one. So again in the uprising against the horrible depravity which destroys young girls—multitudes of ours—I was literally denounced by Catholics; not one came forward. If it was ill done why did nobody try to mend it? I might go on. There are endless works for the protection of shop assistants, overworked railway and tram men, women and children ground down by sweaters, and driven by starvation wage upon the streets. Not one of the works in their behalf were started by us; hardly a Catholic name is to be found in their Reports. Surely we are in the Sacristy. It is not that our Catholics deliberately refuse, but partly they do not take pains to know; partly they are prejudiced. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Partly they are suspicious. "Who knows it is not a proselytising affair?" And finally they live on easily, unconscious that Lazarus lies at their gate full of sores.¹⁰

A thorough-going sacerdotalist probably would reply to the argument based on the fact that apparently the fruits of grace are found in those who have never received it through priestly channels, that there are results of grace, and these the most important, which are scarcely manifest in the temporal order, only in the eternal realm. They would say with the author of Tract XXXV (probably John Henry Newman himself):

A person not commissioned from the bishop may use the words of baptism, and sprinkle or bathe with water *on earth*, but there is no promise from Christ that such a man shall admit souls to the Kingdom of Heaven.

¹⁰ Purcell, *Life of Cardinal Manning*, vol. ii, pp. 780-781.

A person not commissioned may break bread and pour out wine and pretend to give the Lord's Supper, but it can afford no comfort to any to receive it at his hands, because there is no warrant from Christ to lead communicants to suppose that while he does so here *on earth* they will be partakers in the Savior's *heavenly* body and blood.¹¹

But is it not a sufficient answer to such a line of reasoning to say that the government of God is a unity, and that the same moral principles control in this world or in any realm of existence that God has created? Just as fire burning in your grate is the same as fire in the remotest fixed stars, so justice, love, and fellowship with God are the same in all realms. Salvation is the same experience in all souls. It is not only deliverance from punishment; it is not only transportation into an ideal environment. At heart and in essence it is fellowship with God, and deliverance from evil and all the anticipations we associate with heaven are the concomitants and sequences of that fellowship. The author of the Twenty-third Psalm had a deep insight into this truth when he wrote:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.

And the author of this psalm based his confidence of fellowship with God in the future upon the fact that he had the evidence and the consciousness of that fellowship now.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

The Christian thought of our time is apprehending this truth of the unity of life and the unity of the divine government with more clearness than ever before. It is the great inference from monotheism which men have been reluctant to draw.

When one traverses a continent to meet a friend whom he has never seen but from whom he has received great benefits and by whose counsels he has been guided; when Emerson crosses the

¹¹ Quoted by H. C. Sheldon, *Sacerdotalism*, New York, 1909.

Atlantic and greets Carlyle; the past experience of fellowship and sympathy is the basis of the deeper relationship growing out of the larger opportunity. We do not know how the eternal realm differs from that of the earth, but we are absolutely certain of the unity of personal life and the identity of spiritual principles. The word of a priest, no matter what his credentials or how precise his ritual, asserting that by something he has done for us our souls are brought into fellowship with God, is so slight and trivial that it is unmeaning compared with the witness of God's spirit that one is accepted of Christ and is in spiritual fellowship with him, or compared with the fact that one is guided by his principles, manifests his temper, and obeys his word. It seems as if our Lord taught precisely this when he said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

II. Another consideration deserves attention, viz., that sacerdotalism obscures the broad distinction between the church and the kingdom of God and their relations. The church occupies a small place comparatively in the New Testament; Jesus refers to it only three times. Generally, the word *ecclesia* denotes the local company of believers. For political reasons Paul seldom employed the term "kingdom," instead of *ecclesia*. In the letter to the Ephesians, especially, he idealized the *ecclesia* until its content approximated the conception of Jesus when he spoke of "the kingdom." But the two ideas are entirely distinct. The church is the means for promoting the interests of the kingdom. Men are not in the church to be brought into the kingdom; they should be in the church because they are in the kingdom.

The kingdom is the principal topic of our Lord's parables and discourses. When his disciples came asking what should be the chief objects of human desire, he gave them the Prayer of the Kingdom. When the question was put to him: "What is the *summum bonum*?" he said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." And the kingdom of God is conformity of the spirit and life of the individual and of all the activities

of related individuals to the divine ideal. The kingdom of God comes on earth through the obedience of earth to the divine will as heaven obeys it. "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The passage just quoted from Cardinal Manning, in which he describes the temper and the good works of many of those whom he had known outside of his own communion, is an excellent outline of the spirit and purposes and conduct which characterize membership in the kingdom of God. The conditions of this heavenly citizenship are not at all formal or ritualistic; they are spiritual and moral.

The discovery in the New Testament of this doctrine of the kingdom has been the source of some of the strongest inspirations and deepest insights granted to the religious life of our age. We have come to recognize the primacy of the petition that God's kingdom may come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This conception has delivered us from that extreme form of other-worldliness which Byron satirized when he wrote:¹²

" Deep in yon cave Honorius long did dwell,
In hope to merit heaven by making earth a hell."

The doctrine of the kingdom compels us to ask, Who are the proper members of the kingdom? What are the characteristics of a citizen? Or to put it in another way, What manner of person is a good man? What is the true notion of saintship? The Sermon on the Mount is principally devoted to answering that question. But the mediaeval church ignored and forgot the answer of Jesus.

In the view of the mediaevalist the world and the forces of human history are essentially antagonistic to the soul made in the image of God. Man does not realize his true worth in the historic process but by being lifted out of it and above it into a vague supernatural realm. Asceticism is the logical conclusion of this outlook upon life. One of the fundamental distinctions between Romanism and Protestantism is as to this relation of man to nature and the processes of history. Protestant-

¹² Childe Harold, canto i, stanza xx.

ism has not denied that "the world" is in many ways antagonistic to the soul, but at the same time it regards the physical, social, industrial environments in which the lot of men is cast, their place in the historic process, as the field on which men are to manifest devotion to God and their fellows. This is the arena on which sainthood is to be won, and it is to be achieved not by withdrawing one's self from the common duties and relationships of life, but by using them nobly. To one of this cast of thought a merchant or manufacturer who illustrates the Christian temper in his relations to his employees, his customers, and the public, who is living to God as a business man, is just as much entitled to the term "spiritual" as the clergyman or the deaconess.

For the mediaevalist the ideal of the spiritual life is conveyed in unforgettable form in the pages of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio*. In that book the antithesis between the spirit and the world is sharpened. The natural desires and emotions are to be stoutly repressed. Interest in the affairs of daily life is condemned. The entire ideal is ascetic. The antithesis between the spiritual life and the life which the Greeks described as "according to nature" is emphasized to an extreme.

The modern ideal is not, perhaps, illustrated in any formal book, but it shows itself clearly in the personal life of Martin Luther, a husband and father, a friend and neighbor, endeavoring to carry into these relations, however imperfectly he succeeded at times, the temper of the Gospel. This ideal is finely exemplified in the modern Christian business man who wins wealth by legitimate means, who uses it to promote many good causes, who gives not only his money but himself to them, who is without reproach as an employer, a neighbor, a citizen, or a Christian. Simeon Stylites is the mediaeval saint; the modern saint is David Livingstone,—explorer, scientist, civilizer, and missionary,—a man who laid the foundations of the kingdom of God in a whole continent.

The mediaeval ideal of sainthood is given in Parkman's description of Jeanne le Ber, the saint of Montreal.¹³ The modern ideal of sainthood is represented by a wife and mother who interpenetrates all her duties and relationships with the Christian motive

¹³ The Old Régime in Canada, pp. 356-358.

and temper. And this is the ideal of the Sermon on the Mount. The spiritual is not the unearthly but the truly normal.

Membership in the kingdom of God means a life of this kind, and not translation into a vague supernatural realm at variance with the natural order. It means being a good man according to the ideal of Jesus, and the conditions of achieving this goodness are not at all formal or ritual; they are ethical and spiritual. The gospel is not a system of magic by which one may be brought into a life of goodness independently of his own co-operation. The gospel is a message to the intellect, to the affections, and to the will, and no one receives its grace until he makes an intelligent, affectionate, and resolute response to it. No one can exercise faith for another any more than he can see or love for another.

The supreme function of the church is to extend the kingdom of God by bringing to men the message of revelation. Only those who are loyal subjects of the kingdom fulfil the conditions for membership in the church, or minister to the function of the church. Whatever formal or ritual observances may be associated with church membership, the essential condition, without which everything else is worthless, is membership in the kingdom of God.

To one who holds this conception of the church and of the kingdom, and of their mutual relation, the church has no grace to impart. There is no mysterious, magical power conveyed through any of its officers or any of its ceremonies. What the church does is to witness to the truth and to proclaim the revelation of God in Christ, and, since revelation is not revelation unless it is understood, the principal function of the church is making an appeal to the moral natures of men. And the grace of God is imparted to men through that response of self to the Gospel. The church has no treasures of grace. She is not commissioned to impart anything except the truth, to which she witnesses by teaching and example, and when she leads men to embrace it, the grace of God, imparted by himself, comes into the self-surrendered life.

While a church polity and government are amply justified, and we may even, for the sake of argument, concede that there is an ideal polity, all considerations of government or orders are

purely external and subordinate. They are secondary agencies. The primary agency is the divine spirit awakening a response within human hearts which leads them to co-operate with God. In his best moments Luther described faith as "the personal apprehension of Christ's living presence with the heart and the entire surrender to his power." It is personal faith that becomes the tangent point between the soul and Christ, and the channel of divine grace. As Luther said, there is no priesthood except the priesthood of all believers. "There is one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2 5).

III. Our protest also derives great force from a worthy conception of the divine character. By the practical exigencies of human life, the Roman obedience, which carries the sacerdotal theory to an extreme development, has not only admitted the validity of lay baptism but has anathematized those who deny it. This anathema is a magnificent demonstration of the power of a worthy conception of God to destroy a narrow theory. On the Roman assumption that baptism was essential to salvation, any worthy conception of God made it impossible to tolerate the view that the salvation of men was dependent on the act of a priest, who might be physically unable to administer the rite. This breach in the sacerdotal theory indicates the fatal argument against it. The only alternative to the recognition of lay baptism was that baptism is in no wise essential to salvation, and that, in our judgment, was the true position. The Roman church was unable to go to that extent, but it did strike a mortal blow to thorough-going sacerdotalism in its recognition of lay baptism.

In the discussion of the divine character any considerations drawn from a minute exegesis of Scripture or from the interpretations and practices of antiquity seem to be irrelevant. The caution of Lord Bacon is of force:

It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such as is unworthy of Him, for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely, and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity. Plutarch well saith to that purpose: "Surely, I had rather a great deal that men should say there was no such man as Plutarch, than that they should say that there

was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born." ¹⁴

Erasmus gave beautiful and classic expression to the immediacy of the divine help in his colloquy on the Shipwreck. The ship has struck and everyone is in alarm.

A. Did they pray meanwhile?

B. Earnestly. One sang, *Salve regina!* another, *Credo in Deum.* Some there were who had special prayers, not unlike magic formulas against danger.

A. How religious we are in times of affliction! In times of prosperity neither God nor saints come into our head. What were you doing all this time? Did you offer vows to none of the saints?

B. Not one.

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A. But you sought the protection of some saint?

B. Not even that.

A. Why not?

B. Because heaven is a large place. If I commend myself to some saint,—St. Peter, for example, who is most likely to hear me first of all, since he stands at the door,—before he goes to God and explains my case, I shall be already lost.

A. What did you do then?

B. I went immediately to the Father himself, saying: "Our Father who art in heaven." None of the saints hears sooner than he, and none gives more willingly what is asked.

Is it not true that we may go directly to God, that his relationship to the soul is immediate, and that repentance and faith are the only conditions of receiving his choicest blessing? Is it not true that a company of shipwrecked sailors on a desert island whose hearts have been moved toward God in self-surrender by studying a New Testament that has been saved from the sea, may form a church as "valid," in any rational sense of the word "valid," as any church that ever existed, and may celebrate the sacraments in a way as acceptable to God and as profitable to themselves as any enthroned bishop or mitred abbot can minister these symbols? Why is not the principle that the Roman church has admitted in regard to baptism to be applied in case of necessity to all rites of religion?

¹⁴ Bacon, *Essays*, "On Superstition."

But, it may be replied, however this position may be justified from a theoretical point of view, as a matter of historical fact has not the divine grace been mediated to men through specific channels? Was there not under Judaism a chosen people and a restricted priesthood? Is not the burden of the Old Testament the peculiar relationship of Israel to the Most High, one shared by no other race or people?

All this might be admitted, but when we argue from the Old Testament that similar conditions prevail in Christian times, we overlook the distinctive note of universality that Christianity introduced into the whole conception of religion. It was given to Peter, by nature one of the most narrow and exclusive of our Lord's first disciples, to see that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." The Epistles to the Hebrews and to the Galatians lose most of their significance if the grace of God is dependent on any human means or order whatever. It is interesting to observe with what painful art the New Testament must be treated to draw from it any conclusion but that the main thing, so transcending all others that in comparison with it they become almost negligible, is the personal attitude of the individual soul toward God. This is the true universality of Christianity. In its heart and essence it emancipates itself from all externalities and, as Luther saw, brings the human soul into direct personal relationship with God in Christ.

But does not this view disparage the place of the church in the Christian religion? To some it may appear to have this result, but it only does so by remanding the church to its true place and indicating its proper function. Immense mischief has been done by conceiving of the church as composed of those who are to receive the Christian life because they are members of it, instead of being composed of those who are members of it because they have received divine grace. From this point of view the church is only in a limited and secondary sense a channel of grace; it is primarily a witness and a seal to grace. And so, when we come to the question with which we are specifically concerned, ordination, whether episcopal or that of Geneva or of Scotland, only formally, externally, creates a ministry. The creation, as

Hooker clearly saw, is by the call and the grace of Christ, and the act of the bishop or of the presbytery or of the council or of the single church simply authenticates and attests, so far as prayerful human judgment may, the reality of the divine call. But the grace that resides in the ministry, and is transmitted through it, is not imparted to men by men through any process whatever; it comes to the man from the Risen Lord, and seals a human ministry with divine tokens.